

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): An escalator, having a pair of balustrades disposed on both sides of traveling steps, comprising:

a balustrade end ~~for turning~~ configured to turn back a handrail belt wound around ~~[[on]] each of said balustrade balustrades;~~

a skirt end portion having a belt entrance port ~~for~~ configured to receive the handrail belt, and an outer edge of the skirt end portion furthest away from the traveling steps extends further in an axial direction of the traveling steps than an inner edge of the skirt end portion closest to the traveling steps to guide items towards the traveling steps; and

an indicator ~~for indicating the~~ configured to indicate operating conditions of the escalator, wherein

~~[[the]]~~ a front face of the skirt end portion includes an inclined surface at a predetermined angle angle with a vertical plane ~~and with the direction of passengers' riding from the entrance to the escalator, and~~

~~the indicator is disposed such that its~~ a display face of the indicator conforms to the inclination of the inclined surface.

2. (Currently Amended): The escalator according to claim 1, wherein the angle of the inclined surface with a vertical plane is 5 to 30° and ~~[[the]]~~ an angle of the inclined surface with the axial direction of ~~passengers' riding~~ the traveling steps is 45 to 85°.

3. (Currently Amended): The escalator according to claim 2, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a lower end edge of the front face of the skirt end portion is positioned forward of the belt entrance port.

4. (Original): The escalator according to claim 3, wherein the belt entrance port of the skirt end portion projects from the front face of the skirt end portion and has an inclined end surface having an opening.

5. (Original): The escalator according to claim 4, wherein the end surface of the belt entrance port is inclined at an angle of 60 to 85° with respect to a horizontal plane.

6. (Currently Amended): The escalator according to claim 5, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a moving direction of the handrail belt at the belt entrance port makes an angle of 5 to 30° with a horizontal plane.

7. (Currently Amended): The escalator according to any one of claims 3 to 6, ~~[[the]]~~ a height of the belt entrance port of the skirt end portion from a floor is at least 170 mm.

8. (Original): The escalator according to claim 1, wherein the front face of the skirt end portion comprises a gently curved surface with rounded corners.

9. (Original): The escalator according to claim 1, wherein the skirt end portion is adapted for concentrated arrangement of various instruments such as a switch, a sensor and an indicator.

10. (Currently Amended): A skirt end structure of an escalator having a pair of balustrades disposed on both sides of traveling steps, said skirt end structure~~[[,]]~~ is configured

~~to be~~ mounted in a balustrade end ~~for turning~~ configured to turn back a handrail belt wound around each said balustrade, comprising:

a belt entrance port ~~[[for]]~~ configured to receive the handrail belt;

an indicator ~~for indicating the~~ configured to indicate operating conditions of the escalator; and

a front face having the belt entrance port thereon and including an inclined surface at a predetermined ~~angles~~ angle with a vertical plane and ~~with the direction of passengers' riding from the entrance to the escalator~~ an outer edge of the front face furthest away from the traveling steps extends further in an axial direction of the traveling steps than an inner edge of the skirt end portion closest to the traveling steps to guide items towards the traveling steps,

wherein ~~the indicator is disposed such that its~~ a display face of the indicator conforms to ~~[[the]]~~ an inclination of the inclined surface.

11. (Currently Amended): The skirt end structure according to claim 10, ~~which is comprised of~~ wherein the skirt end structure is an exchangeable unitized structure configured to be mountable to the balustrade end.

12. (Currently Amended): The skirt end structure according to claim 11, wherein the angle of the inclined surface with a vertical plane is 5 to 30° and ~~[[the]]~~ an angle of the inclined surface with the axial direction of ~~passengers' riding the traveling steps~~ is 45 to 85°.

13. (Currently Amended): The skirt end structure according to claim 12, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a lower end edge of the front face is positioned forward of the belt entrance port.

14. (Original): The skirt end structure according to claim 13, wherein the belt entrance port projects from the front face and has an inclined end surface having an opening.

15. (Original): The skirt end structure according to claim 14, wherein the end surface of the belt entrance port is inclined at an angle of 60 to 85° with respect to a horizontal plane.

16. (Currently Amended): The skirt end structure according to claim 15, wherein [[the]] a moving direction of the handrail belt at the belt entrance port makes an angle of 5 to 30° with a horizontal plane.

17. (Currently Amended): The skirt end structure according to any one of claims 13 to 16, wherein [[the]] a height of the belt entrance port from a floor is at least 170 mm.

18. (Original): The skirt end structure according to claim 10 or 11, wherein the front face comprises a gently curved surface with rounded corners.